

## The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost Matthew 17:14-23

And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry. (KJV)

The Lord Jesus Christ proclaims the value of strong faith, prayer and fasting in the current Gospel. Christians face life's challenges each day. Too often these fundamentals of the Christian life do not get the proper attention.

Christians often weaken their personal faith in the Lord. This diminishing occurs by lack of fervent prayer and failure to nourish the heart, mind and soul. Believers periodically weaken their practice of fasting as they proceed through life.

Being attentive to the content of the Divine services is necessary for nourishment. Failing to consciously practice fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays and during the fast periods reduces the strength of faith.

The Holy Scriptures provide nourishment for all of life. The Holy Scriptures are available in many different formats in today's world. Believers availing themselves of the Scriptures feed the soul.

The Church is continuing to celebrate the Dormition of the Mother of God. The Mother of God is ever-present to believers as an intercessor before the Lord. The Mother of God is within reach of each believer by sincere prayer.

The power of the Mother of God is documented through the centuries. Believers benefit by praying regularly to the Mother of God and keeping her in mind. Daily life is a challenge and the Mother of God eases the burden on believers.

God's Holy Church is enriched with the lives of the saints and the martyrs. Wise believers heed the presence of the saints and martyrs and regularly fervently seek their intercession.

Dealing with deranged individuals is challenging. The father in the current Gospel was wise in turning to the Lord Jesus Christ for help with his son. The father's love for his son is evident as he sought healing.

Jesus healed the son. Jesus used the son's healing to teach the value of strong faith, prayer and fasting. Believers benefit when consistently assessing the strength of personal faith and the practice of prayer and fasting.

The journey from the Baptismal font to the departure from this life can be very long. Believers are challenged to actively seek nourishment of the heart, mind and soul. Believers are expected to pursue growth in Jesus Christ.

The life in Christ is a life of maturity in Christ. The Holy Apostle Paul said: “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” (1 Cor. 13:11)

Growth in Christ requires active participation. The father in the current Gospel took initiative to seek Jesus Christ to heal his son. Believers are expected to take initiative to grow in Christ.

The Church offers unlimited opportunities to nourish the heart, mind and soul. The Church is ever-present and within reach of believers taking initiative to seek growth in Jesus Christ.

With Holy Baptism comes the responsibility to live according to the standards and teachings of Jesus Christ. With the honor of being a Christian comes the responsibility to put into practice Jesus Christ’s teachings.

The Holy Apostles learned the value of prayer and fasting in the current Gospel. Jesus verified the value of strong faith to the Apostles. Today’s Gospel has been taught and proclaimed through the centuries.

In the journey from the Baptismal font to the departure from this life, it is easy for faith to weaken when the believer is not diligent. Vigilance and constant reassessment are needed for faith to remain strong.

The Church offers structured fasting periods through the year for believers to reassess their efforts to follow Christ. Joy arises when the fasting periods are well-honored and full unity with Jesus Christ is restored and strengthened.

Thank God for today’s Gospel. Thank God for the Church proclaiming the Gospel throughout the year for all willing to hear. Thank God for attentive believers incorporating the Gospel in their lives at each Divine Liturgy.

Today is a day for renewal of faith. Today is the opportunity to recommit to following Jesus Christ with fullness of heart, mind and sou. Now is the opportunity to fully value strong faith, prayer and fasting.

The challenges of daily life are reduced to manageable size when Jesus Christ is followed completely. Joy abounds in life when strong faith is joined with serious prayer and fasting.

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The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost. Afterfeast of the Dormition. Holy Martyr Andrew Stratelates. August 19/September 1, 2024. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic.